



September 22, 2006

TO: Local Citizen Corps Councils
CC: State Citizen Corps Councils
Citizen Corps Regional Program Managers
Citizen Corps Program Partners and Affiliates

Re: NOAA Public Alert Radio distribution to public schools

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Department of Education, and the Department of Homeland Security are partnering to launch a significant nationwide project: ‘America is Safer When Our Schools Are Safer.’ NOAA Public Alert Radios will arrive at nearly 80,000 public schools across the United States and its territories in the coming weeks. These radios will also be delivered to public schools that may already have radios per a state mandate, such as Washington, Tennessee, North Carolina, Maryland, Florida, and Mississippi—ensuring they have the most current models. This initiative began last year with a pilot distribution of over 16,000 NOAA Radios to two states (Kentucky and Alaska) and 20 Urban Areas.

As a Citizen Corps point of contact, you know that NOAA Public Alert Radios play an important role in the safety of our children, schools, and communities. The Radios are designed to signal different types of alerts, ranging from weather emergencies to child abductions and from chemical accidents to acts of terrorism. The Radio acts as a sentry, standing guard 24/7, to sound an alarm when danger threatens.

We are writing to request your assistance to make sure that the Radios are received and registered and are programmed appropriately to be deployed as part of the alert system in all U.S. public schools. This project will make an important contribution to the safety of our school children and provide an excellent opportunity to promote collaboration at the local level between critical partners, including local school leaders, emergency management, and resources provided through NOAA and Citizen Corps Councils, Programs, and Corps Affiliates.

Citizen Corps Public Alert Radio Program Participation

Radios will be delivered directly to public schools on or around September 22, 2006. The shipment will include the NOAA Radio, a letter to the principal from the Secretaries of the sponsoring agencies (The U.S. Departments of Commerce/NOAA, Education, and Homeland Security) and a brochure about the NOAA Public Alert Radio. The letter identifies Citizen Corps as a resource in helping the school to program the Radio and provides the URL to Citizen Corps (www.citizencorps.gov) for contact information. This means that you may get a call from the school directly, asking for assistance.

To support this project, we are asking Citizen Corps Councils, their Programs, and Affiliates, to take the lead to:



- Contact your local school district Superintendent. Please begin by contacting your local school district Superintendent to discuss how best to reach out to all the schools in your area. If they are not already on your Citizen Corps Council, you might also use this as an opportunity to invite them to join. With the approval of the Superintendent's office, contact the individual schools in your area to schedule an appointment to assist with registering and programming the NOAA Public Alert Radio.
- Train Citizen Corps Program and Affiliate volunteers. Be sure to properly train volunteers who will be visiting the schools on how to program and use NOAA Public Alert Radios. The American Radio Relay League (ARRL), a National Citizen Corps Affiliate, and their network of over 2,000 HAM radio clubs, and the National Weather Service Warning Coordination Meteorologists can assist with this training. For more information on ARRL, visit <http://www.arrl.org>.
- Opportunities for further collaboration. If you have an appointment with the school Principal, Assistant Principal, or Safety Officer, please coordinate with your local Emergency Manager or other emergency responder representative to promote additional opportunities for collaboration, such as starting a junior Citizen Corps within the school, organizing first aid or CERT training for school children, community safety service projects, drills and exercises for the school, and outreach to parents through the PTA.

NOAA Public Alert Radio information on the Internet

For more information on this project, please log on to: <http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov/>.

This site will include:

- Lists of schools receiving the radios and the primary contact at the schools
- On-line form for registering the radios
- Information on contacts and locations of your community partners
- Information for volunteers
- Radio programming information for each brand of radio

And finally, please be sure to coordinate in areas where there are overlapping Citizen Corps Councils, such as a local Council within a county Council. We want to be sure not to duplicate efforts.

Thank you for your support.

The National Office of Citizen Corps